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THE DANGEROUS CLASSES.

WHEN visiting New York, now some twenty years ago, we were a little startled to find that the mean and crowded quarters of that great city exhibited a spectacle of poverty, vice, and misery, closely resembling what one hears of, or is accustomed to observe, in the more squalid and dissolute parts of London, Liverpool, Glasgow, or Edinburgh. For this the European stranger is not prepared by the accounts he has received of the condition of affairs in the United States. Servants, labourers, are in demand to clear and cultivate the ground. Land to be had for the merest trifle—in some places, indeed, offered for nothing to those who are disposed to settle on it. No old institutions, such as we hear so many maundering complaints about in this country. 'Liberty and equality' to any imaginable amount. Protection to native manufactures and commerce on a scale nowhere exceeded. Paper-money sufficient to satisfy the wildest currency crotchets. Yet, with all these coveted boons to make people happy, there, in what as regards wealth and population is entitled to be called the capital of the country, you see concentrated masses of vice and wretchedness apparently differing in no way from what may be seen any day at home—in fact, a 'dangerous class,' the cryptogamia of society, flourishing in dark recesses, just as it does in the Old World. An excellent cure for a variety of political crotcheteers would be a visit to New York!

No doubt, the Old World must bear part of the blame for the accumulated mass of human wreck visible in New York, for great numbers of the impoverished and desperate are of European birth, and were less or more demoralised before they crossed the Atlantic. Admitting so much, it is obvious that there is here, as elsewhere, the well-known tendency in large communities to throw off swarms of unfortunates—the morally and physically weak—intemperates devoted to poverty and the bottle—and against whom society has constantly to protect itself by prisons, the police, and other agencies; though, as is perceived, all will not sometimes do.

As the subject is momentous, we are glad that it was made a matter of special inquiry by Mr Charles Loring Brace, of New York, a person known for his philanthropic endeavours to teach the ignorant, to raise up the depressed, to cheer the despairing, and who felt convinced that 'the cheapest and most efficacious way of dealing with the dangerous classes of large cities, is not to punish them, but to prevent their growth.' We may not agree with all Mr Brace's theories, nor do we think he sufficiently pointed out a certain preventive, but he evidently meant well, and is worth listening to.

In his work, the title of which we subjoin, Mr Brace begins by noticing that there is one essential difference between the dangerous classes of New York and London, or Glasgow. With us, poverty and crime are in many instances inherited from generation to generation. Paupers are the children of paupers, criminals have had criminal fathers. The profuse generosity doled out by the poor-law administration, asylums, and hospitals—with the very best intention—has led to a hereditary abjectness of feeling. In some parts of England, there have been known to be, at least, four generations of parish paupers in direct succession—a class of poor, cultivated on system. America has little of this folly. It is too young a country, and with too many outlets for change of residence, to have fixed and hereditary paupers to an extent worth mentioning. That is an important distinction. But the want of fixity of tenure is compensated by the intensity of the American temperament. As we could see by evening walks through New York, there was a loose recklessness of character, and disposition to use knives in petty quarrels, which was new to us. Mr Brace points out this peculiarity in the vicious American classes. 'Their crimes,' he says, 'have the unrestrained and sanguinary character of a race accustomed to overcome all obstacles. They rifle a bank, where English thieves pick a pocket; they murder, where European *prolétaires* cudgel [kick] or fight with fists; in a riot, they begin what seems the sacking of a city, where English rioters would merely

batter policemen, or smash lamps. The dangerous classes of New York are mainly American born, but the children of Irish and German immigrants. They are far more brutal than the peasantry from whom they descend, and they are much banded together in associations, such as "Dead Rabbit," "Plug-ugly," and various target companies. . . . New York has never experienced the full effect of the nurture of these youthful ruffians, as she will one day. They shewed their hand only slightly in the riots during the war.* From what is added, they seem to make themselves serviceable to political parties, by personating voters, and intimidating people from coming to the poll. Nothing of that kind could be safely attempted in England.

As in Paris and London, it is astonishing how quickly the dangerous classes of New York come out of their doors at any period of public excitement, when any mischief is on foot. During the mad freaks of the Commune in Paris, women went about with petroleum setting fire to dwellings and public buildings. In the same way, women of a degraded class join in riotous proceedings in New York, and help in sacking houses or committing outrages on unoffending negroes. The difference is only in degree, according to local circumstances. A silly magisterial weakness has everywhere had a similar result—the destruction of the railings in Hyde Park, the burning of the Tuileries and Hôtel de Ville; and within memory, only by the prompt intervention of a body of armed pensioners, was Glasgow saved from general sack and destruction. Even with these examples, society has hardly awakened to the fact that, in every large city, there lurks a species of volcano of crime, aggravated according to circumstances. The dingy lanes and courts crowded to suffocation with living and dangerous debris, are so many citadels hostile not less to public health than to social security. Only by dint of police is external order preserved. Sad to say, that is the upshot of our civilisation—be it of Europe, or be it of America—when the nineteenth century is within five-and-twenty years of its close. Political whims, of which there are never wanting persons to make capital, are evidently undeserving of consideration. The dangerous classes are a source of anxiety under every form of government.

According to Mr Brace, the separate members of the riotous and ruffianly masses in New York, are simply grown-up neglected and street-wandering children. He is inclined to estimate the number 'as fluctuating each year between twenty and thirty thousand. But to these, as they mature, must be added, in the composition of the dangerous classes, all those who are professionally criminal, and who have homes and lodging-places. And, again, to these, portions of that vast and ignorant multitude, who, in prosperous times, just keep their heads above water, who are pressed down by

poverty or misfortune, and who look with envy and greed at the signs of wealth and luxury all around them, while they themselves have nothing but hardship, penury, and unceasing drudgery.' Looking at the state of New York as the beau-ideal of republicanism, and as provided with the machinery of a free and excellent system of education, it is painful to record that not more than 'about thirty-one per cent. of the adult criminals can read or write, while of the adult population about six per cent. are illiterate. . . . In the city prisons for 1870, out of 49,423 criminals, 18,442 could not write, and could barely read, or more than thirty-three per cent.'

Juvenile crime in the happy-go-lucky state of affairs in New York is imputed to idleness, or want of a trade; unions which prevent a recourse to chance labour; an increasing aversion among American children, whether poor or rich, to learn anything thoroughly; a preference to make fortunes by lucky and sudden turns, rather than by patient industry; ill-treatment by step-mothers and step-fathers; the desertion of wives and families; overcrowding of dwellings; and, of course, the 'magic cup,' intemperance. The glance given to the homes of the recklessly intemperate is appalling. In these wretched dwellings, 'the hearts of young women are truly broken, and they seek their consolation in the same magic cup; here, children are beaten, or maimed, or half-starved, until they run away to join the great throng of homeless street rovers, and grow up to infest society. . . . In the New York city prisons, during 1870, there were, out of 49,423 criminals, 30,507 of confessedly intemperate habits.' The picture presented of vice-stricken narrow streets and lanes, the resort of outcasts and thieves—the infamous German Rag-picker's Den in Pitt and Willet Streets; the murderous blocks in Cherry and Walter Streets; the thieves' lodging-houses in the lower wards, where street-boys are trained to pocket-picking and burglary; the notorious Rogues' Den in Rotten Row, where it is said no drove of animals could pass by and keep its numbers intact; the fever nests; the crowded dens of organ-boys; and so on, are too horrible to be dwelt upon.

A large part of Mr Brace's volume consists in an account of the voluntary efforts undertaken to mitigate this distressing state of affairs, by means of workshops, improved lodging-houses, day and night schools, Sunday meetings, and various religious influences. To the credit of the wealthier classes, large sums were contributed to carry on the work of reclamation, and, doubtless, much good was done. This benevolently disposed writer, however, as appears to us, trusts too implicitly to these philanthropic measures. He fails to recognise the power of 'draw.' Any one who studies the history of our English and Scotch benevolent institutions, learns that, while assuaging misery, they also create it, by encouraging a dependence on the charitable contributions of the humane. Every one of our cities is a draw, and the more that is given, the attraction becomes the stronger. To cure the wretchedness of large towns, and root out the dangerous classes, by eleemosynary contributions, is proved, by lengthened experience, to be simply impossible.

Whatever benefits may be allowably ascribed to the organisation of charity, industrial schools, and other agencies in large towns, it seems plain to

* *The Dangerous Classes of New York, and Twenty Years' Work among them.*

us, that overcrowding into dark and unwholesome dens is the serious evil which needs to be attacked, and, unless it be overcome, all the efforts of philanthropy will be comparatively abortive. Scottish municipal authorities were among the earliest to recognise this fact. Glasgow took the lead about twelve years ago. An act of parliament was procured to open up the more crowded and insalubrious parts of the city—haunts of vice and misery—and to erect spacious and airy streets instead. Edinburgh immediately followed in 1865. A City Improvement Act was passed, to clear away some of the worst parts of the town, and, in their stead, to introduce new and salubrious thoroughfares. In both cases, compulsory powers were taken to buy up old and semi-ruinous tenements, all the costs incurred being to be discharged by local rates, extending over a series of years. In each instance, a marked degree of success has attended the effort; and the only thing to be regretted is, that the respective statutes did not authorise a still more clean sweep of the dens of misery and infamy. We can say, from a knowledge of the facts, that but for the clamour of visionaries, the eradication of resorts of the dependent and dangerous classes would have been greatly more effective.

What, in cases of this kind, is peremptorily required, is the extirpation of narrow lanes bounded on each side by houses, and closely packed courts, which, for the most part, are dingy and repulsive even at mid-day. In such quarters are the haunts of the confirmed intemperate, the impoverished, and all who are comprehended in the term 'dangerous classes.' Issuing from these dismal and unwholesome resorts, which are almost beyond the pale of civilisation, and where deadly epidemics are seldom absent, men, women, and children in squalid attire come forth at times to loiter and misspend existence in doing nothing, in the public streets. There they are standing idly, with hands in their pockets, or in some way embarrassing the thoroughfares—the children probably scrambling in the gutters. By some extraordinary effort, reading-rooms, museums of science and art, have been established to amuse, instruct, and if possible elevate these abject beings. The attempt is, generally speaking, hopeless. Idle vacuity and the public-house are preferable. In truth, as to bettering their circumstances and improving their minds, they are wholly indifferent. Public gardens, parks, libraries, and museums laid open gratuitously, are wholly thrown away on the uninstructed and degraded classes we speak of. The remedy for what is so deplorable must be something much more incisive. 'Pull down the nests, and the rooks will fly away,' is an old and not inappropriate adage. The harbourages of the reckless and dissolute must be removed, and some provision made for maintaining the decencies of life and the public security. It may be sentimentally deplored that hordes of an impoverished and wretched class should have to be sent adrift; but, practically, the honest, industrious, and thrifty among them will, on being put to their shifts, have little difficulty in getting suitable dwellings at rents within their means. As for the idle, brutal, and dishonest, the sooner they disappear the better.

As appears from the newspapers, Liverpool is at present painfully labouring with the difficulty of unbroken-up bands of the dangerous class, spoken

of as 'corner-men,' from their practice of loitering in idle groups at the corners of streets, but ready for any outrage on unoffending passengers—kicking to death, as is observed, being with them a favourite pastime. A correspondent of *The Times* (January 11), speaking from local knowledge, distinctly mentions that the nuisance of corner-men is due to certain narrow streets and courts. He specifies 'a spot near the Exchange not exceeding 23,500 square yards, as containing about 5000 persons; being nearly equal to a thousand to an acre.' Why such plague-spots are suffered to remain in a city noted for its wealth and commercial enterprise, is not easily understood. Possibly in Liverpool, as well as elsewhere, legal difficulties are apprehended. The legislature, indeed, should be able to smooth away obstructions; but it does not always do so. A bill for city improvement, and on the face of it beneficial to the community, may be factiously opposed, and cost many thousands of pounds before it becomes law; it may even be thrown out on some petty error of a word, or the want of a small mark on a plan. It is not strange, therefore, that often municipal authorities are deterred from taking the proper steps for remedying the immoral and insalubrious overcrowding of cities. The subject is eminently worthy of government handling. What is specially wanted is a general act for the improvement of towns, that could be cheaply set in operation with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, under such safeguards as might be thought desirable. Only, as we think, by such promptly effective measures, can cities hope to rid themselves of the Dangerous Classes.

W. C.

WALTER'S WORD.

CHAPTER XV.—COMING ROUND.

WALTER LITTON was wroth at the conduct of Reginald Selwyn; and he said consolingly: 'You have had a narrow escape, Red Riding-hood, and it should be a warning to you as long as you live. The next time a man professes love for you, and'—

Nellie shook her pretty head, and sobbed out: 'Never, never! that is all over now. And please, don't call me Red Riding-hood any more; I don't deserve it.'

'Well, well; I only say, if such a thing *should* happen, don't keep it from your father. No good ever came from hiding yet. As to this man Selwyn, you have only to tell him from me'—

'I shall tell him nothing from you, sir; I have done mischief enough between you already,' answered she firmly.

'But you will not let him persuade you that he is not married?'

'O no, no, sir!' and she gave a little shudder of loathing, which Walter rightly considered to be more assuring than any protestations.

'And now, not this morning, but to-morrow, you will come and sit to me as usual; and we will be grandpapa and little Red Riding-hood together, just as we used to be.'

'I will come and sit to you, sir,' said Nellie humbly, and with a significant ignoring of his last sentence, which was very pitiful.

And the next morning, Nellie came as usual, pale enough, but not with those fever-bright eyes and haggard looks that she had worn on the previous day.

'Tell me truly, is it all over between you and that man?' asked Walter; but he scarcely needed her earnest assurance that it was so, to convince him that she was not only out of danger, but cured. Anything short of the actual cauterisation use of these scathing words: 'I saw him married with my own eyes,' which Litton had fortunately been able to pronounce, would probably have failed to eradicate the honeyed poison of the treacherous captain; but as it was, she was saved. The shock of the operation had, however, been severe, and the poor girl suffered sadly on her road to convalescence. It was well for her that, besides her duties at home, she had once more her own employment to occupy her thoughts; and it was also well to be in the company of the friendly artist, whose presence could not but remind her of the peril which, thanks to him, she had escaped.

Walter worked hard at his new picture, but it was a relief to him that for the present he could do so at home. If he had had at once to present himself at his patron's house while his wrath was at white-heat against the captain, it would have been difficult for him to discourse of his former ally to Lillian without her seeing that his regard for him had evaporated. For the present, he had not only no forgiveness for him, but not common patience—which means common charity. It was only after many days, and by accusing himself (not without justice) of being so furious against his friend, not because he was a married man, but because he had married Lotty, that he was able to look upon his offence with calmer eyes. There was this to be said, however (and though it made little difference in the moral aspect of the question, it had a very mitigating effect on Walter), no harm had been done after all; and when the time arrived for him to revisit Willowbank, he felt that he could plead for the exiled pair, if his pleading might be of any service, almost as honestly as though the captain had not been one of them. He found Mr Brown in much better case than on his first visit; the gout had left him, and with it much of his peevishness and irritability; while Lillian was looking more beautiful than ever.

He had chosen an upper room for his studio, where his host bustled cheerily in and out, but kept no dragon's watch over him. Upon the first opportunity of their being alone together, Walter congratulated his sitter upon her more cheerful looks, which he attributed to the improvement in her father's health.

'You are more like Joan in her halcyon days, than when I saw you last,' said he.

'You mean to say that I don't look so much as though I had been condemned for a witch, Mr Litton,' answered she, smiling. 'Well, you will be glad to hear there is a good reason for that.'

'I see one reason in your father's recovery.'

'Yes; and there is another, which has also, as I believe, been the cause of his convalescence. There is now a well-grounded hope that he will be reconciled with my sister and her husband.'

'I am delighted to hear it,' said Walter. 'May I hear how that has come about?'

'Well, partly, if not chiefly (as I shall take care to tell them both) through that picture of yours in

the Academy. I don't think a day has passed without my father's having paid a visit there, on his way home from the City. He excuses himself upon the ground, that the Philippa is his property, and that, therefore, he feels an interest in it. But I know that he has a better reason than that. Since, for the present, he cannot see Lotty, he solaces himself with that "counterfeit presentment" of her.'

'But he can see her if he chooses, I suppose?'

'Yes; but there are certain outworks of pride to be broken down before he can permit himself to be persuaded out of what was once a very obstinate resolution. That they are gradually giving way, however, I am certain. A letter came to him lately from Mrs Sheldon—Captain Selwyn's aunt, you know.'

'Yes, yes; I know her very well. But I am surprised at her arguments having such an effect, since she was the means—that is, since it was from her house that your sister was married.'

'Very true; but her husband has lately died, and she has written in great sorrow, wishing to be at peace, she says, with all her fellow-creatures, and lamenting the involuntary part she took in separating father and child.—You look incredulous, Mr Litton.'

'Do I? I did not mean to do so; though certainly I should not have credited Mrs Sheldon with such sentiments. But, again, I should have thought your father to be one of the last men in the world to be moved by them—that is, of course, from any source which might cause him to suspect their authenticity.'

'That is true enough,' answered Lillian; 'but Mrs Sheldon's communication, it seems (for I have not seen it with my own eyes), also informed him that there was some improvement in Captain Selwyn's prospects. A distant cousin of his has died.'

'If it is the Irish cousin, then Selwyn is Sir Reginald,' exclaimed Walter.

'I have heard nothing of that. He gains little advantage, however, I am told, in income; but such as it is, it makes the marriage less unequal in point of fortune; or, rather, dear papa is willing to persuade himself so, which is the main point. If he can only be persuaded to forgive Lotty, she and her husband could both come and live at Willowbank, you know, and we should be so happy together. Then you would always find your friend here, Mr Litton, even if papa should be out, to talk over old times.—You look as if there were some doubt of that.'

'I must have a very incredulous countenance,' observed Walter, smiling.

'You have a very decipherable one, and I think I read it aright. Pray, forgive me for cross-examining you so particularly, Mr Litton; but this matter is to me of the most vital importance. You know Captain Selwyn's character much better than I do. Do you think it impossible, from your knowledge of him, that he would be persuaded to live here?'

'Indeed, I do not. On the contrary, if he has received no accession of income, I do not see how he is well to live anywhere else.'

'But I am so afraid that papa and he may not get on well together; they are so different, you know, in their habits; at least I should suppose so, from all I have heard of my brother-in-law.'

'I think that would be of little consequence,' answered Walter; 'there would on that very account be less cause for antagonism between them. But, in such a case, Selwyn sells out, of course, and becomes an idle man, and at his age that is seldom desirable.'

If Walter Litton's face had been as decipherable as Lilian had described it, and if she had had the key of the cipher, it might have told sad tales. He did not think that plan of Selwyn's living idle at Willowbank would be at all conducive to his wife's happiness; but he could not say so, nor even hint at it.

'Oh, but papa could give him something to do; he has often talked, for example, of getting some one he could trust to superintend his affairs for him; and don't you think'—

But here Mr Brown himself happened to look in, which preserved Walter from the necessity of having to say what he thought of making an ex-captain of Her Majesty's dragoons, who had not at present been remarkable for his business habits, into an estate and property agent. And the subject was not afterwards resumed by Lilian. She was never tired, however, of talking about Lotty, whose return to her home was evidently her one absorbing thought. Not a taint of jealousy, of fear lest she should once more become her father's favourite, and oust herself from the place which in her absence she had occupied, tinged her sisterly love. She had plenty of conversation upon all topics, for she had read and thought much more than most girls of her age, and, indeed, much more than Walter himself; but this homespun talk of hers pleased him most—not only because it concerned Lotty. Her every word seemed to give assurance of the simplicity and unselfishness that dictated it. In some superficial respects, she was inferior to her sister. She had not so much of what her sex term 'style.' She lacked that air of conscious superiority, born of wealth and beauty, which he had noticed in Lotty when he first met her; but she had the same gentle graciousness of look and manner, and twice the wits. It was shocking, as he admitted to himself, to be making so odious a comparison. If he had been interrogated a month ago about Lotty's intelligence, he would have pronounced it perfect; the fact being, that her external charms had been so all-sufficient for him, that he had not looked beyond them; but now he confessed that Lilian was greatly her superior: she had more sense, more feeling, more principle. This was really very hard upon Lotty; but then everything was allowable, or, at all events, excusable, because of this last advantage that Lilian certainly did possess—her thoughts were not entirely monopolised by a beloved object (male). He did not mind their dwelling upon Lotty—far from it—but I think Mr Walter Litton would have privately resented it, had they dwelt upon another Reginald Selwyn. As for having fallen in love with her himself, however, I have already stated what a sensible young man he was, and how ridiculous, impossible, and futile any such notion must have appeared to him; indeed, he was continually repeating to himself a hundred arguments against his committing such a piece of folly, from which we may conclude how safe and sound he felt. If this had not been the case, he would have been placed in quite a dangerous position at Willowbank, for Mr Christopher

Brown, as I have said, left him a good deal alone with Lilian in the painting-room; and the depicting a very beautiful young lady as Joan of Arc affords rather exceptional opportunities for falling in love with her, which a less prudent young gentleman would have found it hard to put away from him. This conduct of his host was caused by his complete confidence in Lilian's character and dutifulness, and not at all from the reflection that she would surely take warning from her sister's fate. He considered Lotty's fiasco in the light of an unparalleled misadventure, which could not possibly happen twice in a respectable family; and perhaps even drew some comfort from its occurrence on that very ground, just as some folks flatter themselves that travelling by rail is all the safer because an accident has taken place on the same line the previous day. At all events, Mr Brown was not only civil to the young painter, but even, so far as his nature permitted him to be, cordial and friendly. He was confidential to him also after dinner; as Walter thought, extremely confidential, but then he did not know that upon one particular topic (and one only) Mr Christopher Brown was prone to be confidential to everybody: this was upon his own personal history and rise in the world, which he was wont to relate in a didactic manner, for the edification of any one he could get to listen to him. How he had begun his financial career by earning pennies for skidding the wheels of omnibuses on Holborn Hill, which was in reality a flight of imagination, though he had told it so often that he had actually begun to think that such was the case. He had been employed, when quite a lad, by the omnibus company, on account of his trustworthiness as a time-keeper, and had occasionally put his shoulder, or, at all events, his hand, to a wheel. But it was Mr Brown's weakness to disparage beginnings, as it is that of others to magnify theirs, in order, by contrast, to make the present, which he had finally achieved, the more magnificent. 'I used to earn pennies, sir—that is, when I was fortunate enough to get a penny for my trouble, instead of a half-penny—by skidding wheels in Holborn Hill. But while they descended, I ascended; while I put the drag on in their case, I accelerated my own motion towards independence. The pennies became shillings, and, begad! I looked at a shilling more than the proverbial number of times in those days, let me tell you, before I parted with it; and then the shillings became pounds. I never got a hundred pounds in a lump, young man, and far less three hundred' (this was in delicate allusion to the price agreed upon for Joan of Arc), 'when I was your age; but what I did get, I saved, and put out to the best advantage. I had only two friends in all the world, sir, at that time, Diligence and Economy; but they stuck to me, and by their help I won the fight.'

Mr Brown might have added, that his too devoted allegiance to them 'at that time,' had prevented his making friends of a human sort till it was too late to make them. If it had not been for his marriage, which, to his honour, was one of affection, he would have had nobody upon whose unselfish attachment he could have counted for the smallest service, from those early days on Holborn Hill up to the present date. His wife had died; and one of his daughters, as we have seen, had undutifully deserted him, so that he had but faithful Lilian left. She was a great treasure, it is true, yet only too

likely to pass into other hands. It was no wonder that he reckoned that wealth at a high value, which was his only consolation for the absence of friendly faces, loving hands, and for the sake of which he had foregone them. Walter pitied, and strove not to despise him, while he quoted his shallow laws about getting and saving, as though they were Holy Writ, and boasted of his growing fortunes. The old man thought him entranced with wonder, and indeed he was so—with wonder how, from such a crabbed stock, two such dainty blossoms as Lilian and her sister could have sprung. And yet Christopher Brown had his good points about him, to which his young guest was by no means blind. He was really a man of strict integrity, notwithstanding that he plumed himself so on its possession; nor was he mean, though he was cautious in spending the wealth which he had so drudgingly acquired. 'I can do as "smart" a thing' (by which he meant as liberal a one) 'as any man, when I think fit,' he would sometimes say; and therein (though he did not often think fit) he spoke no more than the truth. On that first day, Mr Brown confined his private conversation with his guest almost entirely to the topic of his own success in the world; nor did he say one syllable which would have led him to imagine, had he not been aware of the fact, that he had another daughter beside Lilian. And yet there was one circumstance which, in Walter's eyes—sharp enough in drawing a deduction—had a significant reference to Lotty's marriage. After dinner, they had adjourned, for smoking, to an apartment which was evidently the business sanctum of the master of the house: a room in which there was no furniture of the ornamental kind, and not a single book, except one bulky one which happened to be lying on the table. This was the *Peerage and Baronetage of the United Kingdom*. Walter was far too much a man of the world to be surprised at seeing such a volume in such a place; he knew that your 'self-made man' is by no means disinclined to worship at the shrine of those who, unlike himself, are indebted for their making to their ancestors; and he took it up carelessly enough. He was not a little struck, however, by its opening at a particular page, the leaf of which was turned down, so as to point with its edge to the name of Selwyn. 'Selwyn, Sir Richard,' he read, 'fifth baronet; Donaghadee, Ireland, and Long's Hotel, Bond Street. Unmarried. *Heir Presumptive, Reginald Selwyn, Captain 14th Dragoons.*'

And these last words were underlined in pencil.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE DEBT IS PAID.

Twenty-four hours only had elapsed when Walter paid his second professional visit to Willowbank; yet in that short interval, as he could perceive by the manner of his host and hostess, some important incident had taken place. Mr Brown was fussy and nervous; Lilian was nervous too, though her bright eyes and cheerful tone betokened an unusual elevation of spirits. Nothing was said explanatory of this until the three were in the painting-room, and Walter had settled to his work.

Then, 'Your picture is coming home to-day, Mr Litton,' observed the old merchant sententially.

'My picture! What! from the Academy, sir? Nay; that is impossible.'

'Well, if not your picture, the living likeness of it. You did not know, perhaps, that I had another daughter—Lilian's twin-sister?'

'Yes, sir, I knew it.'

'Well, perhaps you know, then, that she has been separated from us by an unfortunate disagreement; in fact, I objected to her marriage, though she married well, as the world calls it—that is, in point of position. Her husband is Sir Reginald Selwyn, Baronet of the United Kingdom.'

The air with which the self-made man delivered himself of this remarkable piece of information was something stupendous. If it had not been for Lilian's presence, and for one other reason, Walter would have burst out laughing. The other reason was, the somewhat serious difficulty of his own position; as to how much he should own to being cognisant of; how much he ought to pretend that he was hearing for the first time. Upon the whole, he thought it best to hold his tongue, and bow.

'Yes, sir, my daughter is Lady Selwyn'—

The old gentleman hesitated, as though he were in doubt whether to add, 'also of the United Kingdom,' or not. 'She has been a stranger to her home for many months; but she is coming hither with her husband to dine to-day. I hope you will join us!'

'Certainly, if you wish it, Mr Brown. But perhaps on such an occasion'—

'A stranger might be in the way, you think,' interrupted the old gentleman. 'On the contrary, we should prefer it. It will tend to make matters go more smoothly. You have yourself, too, had a hand in the matter—unwittingly, it is true—but still we feel, both Lilian and myself, indebted to you for Philippa. It cannot, indeed, be considered a portrait, for Lotty is all smiles and brightness; but there is a something in it which has reminded me of her very much. At all events, we associate you, if you will permit us to do so, with this auspicious meeting.'

Never before had Mr Christopher Brown delivered himself of such sentiments, or given evidence of possessing such a graceful eloquence. That the speech had been prepared, neither of his hearers could for a moment doubt, but whence could he have culled this flowery style? Could it have been *caught*, thought Walter, from his connection—indirect as it was—with the *Peerage and Baronetage of the United Kingdom*, already?

'Under these circumstances,' continued the old gentleman, 'we hope you will not refuse to meet Sir Reginald and Lady Selwyn at our table to-day?'

'I shall be most pleased,' said Walter; then feeling that something more than pleasure was expected of him from such an invitation, he added, 'and honoured.'

'I am sure papa is very glad that you are going to dine with us,' said Lilian, when the old gentleman left the room. 'He feels not a little embarrassment, after what has passed, in meeting Captain Selwyn, and he has never seen him, you know.'

'And I have seen him so often. Don't you think that will be a little embarrassing for me?' inquired Litton comically.

'No; because he thoroughly understands your position. I have written to dear Lotty to explain it all from beginning to end. It was for her husband's

sake, and hers, not your own, that you were silent about your previous acquaintance with him.'

'That is true. But I feel not a little compunction in concealing so much from your father. He is so kind and hospitable to me; and I feel as though I had gained his good-will by false pretences.'

'I quite understand your feelings, Mr Litton; but I really do not see how matters could have been managed otherwise. I am sure, if he had known that you had been acquainted with my sister, and especially your share in her elopement (for such he considers it), he would not have been so moved by your picture; indeed, he might very possibly have believed it to be a concerted plan between you and her husband; and you know it is not as if she had really sat to you. The likeness, if not absolutely accidental, was not designed; you had never even seen her as you have represented her.'

'That may be all very true, but I am far from satisfied with my own conduct. Don't you think, Miss Lilian, that now, when all has turned out so well, it would be better to make a clean breast of it, and tell your father?'

'Oh, *pray*, don't, Mr Litton,' she pleaded. 'You don't know how large a share you have had—even papa admitted it just now—in this happy reconciliation. Without you—that is, without your help, unintentional, but yet to which I am sure Lotty has been so welcome—all this would never have been brought about. Mrs Sheldon's letter of itself would have done nothing, had not papa been already, as it were, prepared for it; and remember, it has all been done for my dear father's good, for his happiness. He is not like the same man since his heart has been softened towards Lotty. Oh, please, don't let us run any risk.'

'It shall be as you wish,' sighed Walter, 'and still, as they say in the melodramas, "I will dissemble." After all, it is only my own character for straightforwardness, not yours, I am glad to think, that is in danger; only, when the truth does come out, and your father turns me out of his house as an impostor, I hope you will say a good word for me, Miss Lilian.'

'Indeed, indeed, I will, Mr Litton. But as for turning you out of the house, that is nonsense. In fact, what necessity is there for the truth, as you call it—that is, for the facts of a case which you have never been asked to speak about—coming out at all? It is very much more to Captain Selwyn's interest than to yours, that you should be considered a stranger to him. Oh, Mr Litton,' she continued, suddenly bursting into tears, 'I am afraid you are thinking hardly of me. I do not love deceit; I hate it: I hate myself for counselling you to hide the truth; it is only that of the two evils—the deceiving my father for his own good; and the telling him all, with the dreadful risk of his forgiveness to Lotty being cancelled—I honestly believe that I am choosing the less.'

'I quite understand you, dear Miss Lilian,' answered Walter earnestly, and his voice was low and soft as her own as he spoke the words; 'I quite understand; nor have I for a moment imputed to you any other motive save that which has actuated you, and which—whether it be wise or not—seems to me to do you nothing but honour. My only desire is to serve you and yours, and

all that you wish shall be done in your own way.'

Here he held out his hand, and she put hers in his, and pressed it thankfully. It was only, as it were, in ratification of their little compact; but at the touch of that small palm, Walter's pulses began to throb in a fashion which—if we did not know how very sensible a young man he was, and with what admirable arguments he had steeled himself against the indulgence of futile hopes—was almost like the spring-time of Love itself.

She did well to be grateful to him, for he was doing for her and one other what he would have done for no one else. Concealment of any kind, and far more deception, was abhorrent to Walter. He had reproached himself all along for the part he had been playing at Willowbank in relation to his host, notwithstanding all these arguments which Lilian had urged in its favour, and which he had already applied to the case in his own mind; but he had resolved, when the reconciliation between Lotty and her father should have been accomplished, that he would tell all to him, and relieve himself, at any cost, from this irksome burden. And now he had been persuaded to carry it still longer, in spite of a certain penalty that would be very grievous to him, more grievous, indeed, than he dared to own, but which he now foresaw would sooner or later be the consequence of his so doing. In one respect, he thought he judged the old merchant's character more accurately than his own daughter; and he did verily believe that the day on which Christopher Brown discovered himself to have been deceived would be the last he (Litton) would ever pass at Willowbank. Such a sentence of exile would be very bitter to him (more bitter, as I have said, than he would have liked to confess even to himself), and yet he had promised to risk its infliction; and there was one thing certain—he would keep his word. Walter Litton was, upon the whole, an impulsive man; his impulses were good, which was fortunate, since he acted on them rather than on fixed convictions. Of the possession of the thing called 'principle,' in connection with any well-defined system of religion or philosophy, he could not boast: he did what was right—such as an act of generosity, for instance—because it seemed to him right at the moment. He never went home and looked at the matter this way and that, and, upon the whole, decided that it was 'contrary to principle,' and therefore didn't do it. I have no doubt that would have been the right way for him to go to work; but yet it is certain that most such proceedings in our mental parliament do end in the 'Noes' having it; and I have always noticed that stingy persons are possessed of very high principles indeed. But though he was so deficient in this respect, there was one thing to which Walter held with the tenacity of a martyr to his faith—and that was, his word. He might be wrong in doing so—he sometimes was, just as the martyr is wrong—but he stuck to it all the same. He was wrong, as I venture to think, in this particular case; but he had given his word to Lilian, and therefore she did well to be grateful, for it was irrefragable. Have you noticed, reader, what kind of person it is—you may not have done so, for the genus is very rare—whose word is thus to be depended upon? It is generally a woman, or, if not a woman, a man of feminine type; one whose physique, whose voice,

whose manner, do not impress one very forcibly, or give one much assurance of power—delicate-handed, soft-voiced creatures, in whom such resolution is quite an unexpected trait, and which we resent the more in them from that very circumstance. 'Obstinate as a mule,' we call such a man, who opposes himself to our wishes, just because he has promised to do this or that; or, if it be not a man, 'A self-willed little slut.'

Walter did not stay on at Willowbank till dinner-time on this occasion. His host dropped no word, as before, of there being no necessity for evening dress; the coming of Sir Reginald Selwyn, Baronet of the United Kingdom (which he was not, by-the-by, but his father-in-law had picked the phrase up, and found it pleasant, like a sweet morsel rolled under the tongue), and of Her Ladyship, his wife, was a circumstance that seemed to Mr Christopher Brown imperative of evening dress; so Walter went home to attire himself. He found a letter awaiting his arrival, inclosing a cheque for fifty pounds, and a few lines from the captain:

MY DEAR LITTON—I inclose the pair of ponies, for which accept my best thanks. You are, of course, aware that the old gentleman has come round, that it is a case of 'Bless you, my children,' and 'Welcome home.' This all comes, as I told you it would, of my having become a Baronet. Only an Irish one, it is true; but then, you know, with some people, even 'Lord Ballyraggum is better than no lord at all.' My wife desires her kind regards.—Yours faithfully, REGINALD SELWYN.

P.S.—Think of your having struck up an acquaintance upon your own account with my new papa! How small the world is, after all!

Walter read this missive more than once, and with much more attention than its contents would have seemed to deserve. It was not a gracious letter, nor, though its style was so familiar, did it smack much of ancient friendship. If the captain knew that his friend was intimate at Willowbank, he must surely also know how that intimacy had come about; and therefore must be aware that the reconciliation was by no means solely due to his fire-new title. Walter was not a man to look for 'a return' for any good service, even in the shape of an expression of gratitude, but this total ignoring of what he had done in the matter was not quite pleasant. The phrase, 'struck up an acquaintance,' and especially the words which followed it, 'on your own account,' seemed indeed almost offensive. He studied the epistle thus carefully, in order to learn from it, if possible, whether little Red Riding-hood had told Selwyn from whose lips she had received the information that had disappointed his designs. Upon the whole, Walter thought that she had told him, or if not, that he had guessed the truth. There was a 'stand-at-guard' air about the letter, which was not in his friend's usual style, though it was not absolutely hostile. He was less indifferent to this than he would have been at the time he bade Nellie use his name; not only because time had mitigated his wrath against the captain, but because he did not wish to have an enemy at Willowbank. He deemed it probable, as I have said, that, sooner or later, he should be banished thence, but he wished to put off that banishment as long as possible. What seemed very strange even to himself, was, that this was the first con-

sideration that occurred to him; and not the reflection, that within an hour or so, he was about to meet Lotty for the first time since her marriage, and in her father's house.

ABOUT THE DINNER-TABLE.

WHAT to eat and drink, is a problem for the solution whereof atmospheric influences must be taken into consideration, if it be admitted that 'in proportion as his climate is colder, man requires for his comfort and support a larger supply of heat-producing aliment.' It is stated that 'Sir John Franklin, to his surprise and alarm, saw an Esquimau youth consume fourteen pounds of tallow-candles at a single sitting; and the young gentleman was desirous of continuing the feast, when Sir John, who had offered to give him as many candles as he could eat, bought him off with the present of a large lump of fat pork.' It is curious, therefore, from the atmospheric point of view, to find the luxurious Romans of the Empire charged with a 'grossness of taste, which made these epicures of a hot climate prefer pork to more delicate meats.' As for their favourite sauce, or seasoning, or flavouring, it is said to have been 'garum,' or 'liquamen,' and to have predominated in nearly all dishes to the same extent to which garlic predominates in the cookery of certain moderns. An excellent result is sometimes, though rarely, arrived at by questionable means; and certainly the process whereby the garum or liquamen—for one is said to be the same thing as the other—was obtained does not seem to promise any exquisitely delicate whetter of appetite. The confection, according to authority, 'was obtained from the intestines, gills, and blood of fishes, great and small, stirred together with salt, and exposed in an open vat in the sun until the compound was putrid. . . . When putrefaction had done its work, wine and spice-herbs were added to the liquescent garbage. Finally, the liquor of this loathsome compound was strained, and sent . . . from Greece to the Roman market.' However, there are champions of this repulsive mixture; they maintain that 'there lurks a mystery in the details handed down to us of its mode of preparation,' and that, 'if we knew the whole process, there would be an end to the illiberal prejudice against the appetising fluid.' This fluid was used in the 'haggis, as the Scotch term it,' which 'was a favourite preparation with Romans; but, instead of mincing the flesh used for this dish, they as often as not brayed it in a mortar, with liquamen and seasonings, till it became a soft pulp. The usual farinaceous ingredient of the Roman haggis was frumentum; but often no grain was employed. The Apician pork-haggis—esteemed above all other compositions of the same kind—was a boiled pig's stomach filled with fry and brain, raw eggs, and pine-apples, beaten into a pulp, and treated with the never absent sauces and seasonings.' However, if it be true that our own 'feudal forefathers' were wont to 'put sugar on their oysters,' there is no telling what atrocious tendencies may lurk in our blood, and it is advisable to remember the proverb which recommends those who live in glass houses not to throw stones.

At one time, on the occasion of grand dinners, the duty of carving was a matter of grave arrangement, and governed by certain strict rules. Subsequently, in the seventeenth century, 'English gentlewomen

were instructed by schoolmistresses and professors of etiquette as to the ways in which it behoved them to carve joints. That she might be able to grasp a roast chicken without greasing her left hand, the gentle housewife was careful to trim its foot and the lower part of its legs with cut-paper. . . . The paper-frill which may still be seen round the bony point and small end of a leg of mutton, is a memorial of the fashion in which joints were dressed for the dainty hands of lady-carvers, in time prior to the introduction of the carving-fork, an implement that was not in universal use so late as the Commonwealth.' In the work called *Lady Rich's Closet* (1653), 'the ingenious gentlewoman of the period' is thus exhorted: 'Distribute the best pieces first; and it will appear very comely and decent to use a fork; so touch no meat without it.' It is a pity that so much 'misfortune has attended several attempts to establish seminaries for the sufficient instruction of womankind in the affairs of the table. The change of fashion,' it is asserted, 'which degraded carving from the rank of the elegant accomplishments, gave the *coup de grâce* to the Beak Street Academy, where, so late as thirty years since, a young lady on the eve of her marriage might acquire the art of cutting meat, in a course of twelve lessons, at a guinea a lesson, exclusive of the viands on which she operated. A similar fate befell the Berners Street School of Cookery, which gave its grandest dinner on the day that saw' the present Princess of Wales 'pass through London on her triumphal way to Windsor. . . . The South Kensington School of Cookery opened under fairer auspices, but hitherto Professor Buckmaster's zeal and ability have barely preserved it from the failure which usually follows ridicule.'

Of summoning the members of a household to the dinner-table, there are three principal methods, according as the horn, the bell, or the gong may be preferred. In olden time, it seems, the horn or cornet was the favourite instrument. And to that fact a curious, not to say a bold, piece of etymology is referred. 'At the period,' says Alexandre Dumas, 'when noon was the dinner-hour, the horn or cornet (*le cor*) was used in great houses to announce dinner. Hence came an expression which has been lost; they used to say, "cornet (or trumpet) the dinner" (*cornez le diner*).' So that, as we are informed, "cornet the dinner" was the feudal equivalent of the modern and more familiar phrase, "ring for dinner." And in days when inferior people ate little meat in the winter months save salted beef, the more usual form of the order was "*cornez le bœuf*," or "corn the beef." Hence the name of the well-known viand, 'corned beef.' 'Richardson errs egregiously when he insists that *corned* beef derived its distinguishing epithet from the grains or corns of salt with which it was pickled. Corned beef is trumpeted beef, or, as we should nowadays say, dinner-bell beef.' Here, thrown down from the dinner-table, is a bone of contention for etymologists.

How long one should sit at the dinner-table, is sometimes a matter of controversy. Grimod de la Reynière, 'the famous editor of the *Almanach des Gourmands*,' says that 'five hours at table are a reasonable latitude to allow in the case of a large party and recondit cheer.' Legend tells of a certain Archbishop of York 'who sat three entire years at dinner.' But the mistake arose out of a

'merry jest.' The archbishop had just sat down to dinner one day about noon, when he was called upon by an Italian priest, who, hearing he was at dinner, 'whiled away an hour in looking at the Minster,' and called again, but was again 'repelled by the porter.' Twice more, at two P.M. and at three P.M., the Italian repeated his visit, and was either told or led to infer that His Grace was still engaged in the same occupation, for, at the fourth visit, 'the porter, in a heate, answered never a worde, and churlishlie did shutte the gates upon him.' Hereupon, the Italian, whose time was short, departed 'for London, and returned to Rome without seeing the spiritual chief of the northern province. Three years later, encountering in Rome an Englishman who declared himself right well known to His Grace of York, the Italian, clothing his face with a merry smile, inquired drolly: "I pray you, good sir, hath that archbishop dined yet?"' Whence arose the malicious story of a three years' sitting at dinner.

As to the 'best number of guests for an agreeable dinner,' it is probable that the world will never agree. Grimod de la Reynière preferred three to any other number, and would not, on any account, suffer six to be exceeded. The 'finest gourmands of modern France and modern England' have declared twelve to be 'permissible.' But the most humorous view ever taken of the subject is attributed to a certain 'President of the Tribunal at Avignon,' who remarked to a friend one day: 'By my faith, we have just had a superb turkey. It was excellent, stuffed to the beak with truffles, tender as a chicken, fat as an ortolan, aromatic as a thrush. By my faith, we left nothing but its bones!' 'And how many were there of you?' inquired the friend. 'Only two,' answered the other with a gentle smile. 'Only two!' exclaimed the astounded hearer. 'Precisely so,' replied the lawyer: 'there was myself, and there was—the turkey.' As to dining alone, there are many reasons for and against it; but one of the objections was forcibly put by Theodore Hook, who said: 'When one dines alone, the bottle *does* come round so fast.'

Closely connected with the dinner-table are the caterers for it. And amongst them a very honourable position must be assigned to Samuel Birch, the famous confectioner of Cornhill, where he supplied such turtle-soup and oyster-patties and other delicacies that he 'drew to his shop epicures from every quarter of the town.' So much may be already generally known about him; but very many readers will, no doubt, be surprised to learn that as 'a man of wit and letters, he produced plays that held the stage, and books that are still readable, though seldom read. One of his musical dramas, *The Adopted Child*, was popular long after the author had killed his last turtle and breathed his last breath. His temper was so amiable, and his humour so lively, that he heartily enjoyed the joke when, on his appointment to be colonel of the City Militia, it was proposed to style him Marshal *Tureen*. "By all means," the confectioner cried gaily to the originator of this witticism, a brother officer in the militia, who, as a great flour and corn merchant, regarded confectioners disdainfully; "and you shall be Marshal *Sacks*." Throwing himself into local politics, he figured as common-councillor, alderman, and Lord Mayor, the year of his mayoralty being the famous 1815. When

Chantrey's statue of George III. was placed in the Council Chamber of Guildhall, during the Waterloo year, Birch's pen produced the inscription for it. His daughter married Lamartine the poet.

It is not very long since a not very successful attempt, by means of letters, pamphlets, lectures, and experimental dinners at the Langham Hotel, and at private houses, was made, by enthusiastic and unprejudiced gentlemen, to set horse-flesh, as an ordinary dish, upon the dinner-table, at any-rate of the poorer classes. It may be news, however, to the world in general, that donkey has been served up, as the writer of this article can testify, at a gentleman's table in London. The writer's experience, however, differs vastly from that recorded in the following anecdote: 'The company had enjoyed the soups, fish, and entrées, and some of them were screwing up their courage to take a slice of donkey on the appearance of the "joints," when a guest observed to the host: "So far your dinner has been excellent, though rather commonplace; but when will Neddy be served?" "My dear fellow," the entertainer answered, "with the exception of the salmon, the chief materials of every dish handed to you were taken from a tender two-year-old donkey, killed six days since by my butcher. The soups, the patties which you mistook for veal patties, the cutlets that you imagined to be lamb, the fillet with truffles, were all of donkey." The writer of this article met with different treatment: there was no disguise at all; the table was decorated with thistles and (Jerusalem) artichokes; there was a bill of fare, printed, in which the soup was significantly termed *moke-turtle*, the cutlets significantly termed *cotelettes à la Balaam*, and so on, down to *Mocha* coffee and *Ass-am* tea. Moreover, each dish in which there was an asinine ingredient was accompanied by another dish based upon some more conventional animal, so that there was a chance for weak brethren to keep their consciences inviolate. The general opinion of those who had sufficient strength of mind to 'go the whole-donkey,' was that, for soups, patties, and the like, ass-flesh would do as well as anything else; and that, so far as the plain joint went, ass-flesh would be excellent, when you couldn't get anything else. Tradition reports that the person who took the matter most to heart was the hospitable entertainer's cook, and that she, with all that intelligence which distinguishes her British sisterhood, when she learned that she had been made instrumental in cooking donkey, burst into tears, and gave immediate warning.

The tortures to which 'the Strasbourg goose' is subjected by those who cater for the table, have frequently been held up to execration; but a most amusing story is told relating to a French peer, who, having for the first time seen an account of them, 'burst into tears, declaring that he would never again eat the liver of a tortured goose;' adding, however, after a moment's reflection, in language worthy of a born Irishman: 'And why should I, since the livers of two Toulouse ducks, treated in the same way, are equal in size and flavour to the largest liver of the Strasbourg goose?' Of another Frenchman, the Chevalier d'Allignac, who had escaped from Paris to London 'in the evil days of the great French Revolution,' a different sort of anecdote is told. The chevalier, it is said, had great difficulty in making a bare subsist-

ence, until one day he was asked by 'a young English nobleman' to 'mix a salad in the French fashion;' which he did with such success, that he, under the title of the 'gentleman salad-maker,' became 'the hero of the hour,' received an honorarium of five pounds a time for his services, 'started his carriage, in order that he might pass quickly from house to house during the dining hours of the aristocracy;' and ultimately returned to his native land with a fortune, acquired partly by salad-making in person, and partly by a 'lucrative trade in sauces, spices, and other culinary dainties,' which he sold to those 'who lived beyond the boundary of his quarter for personal attendance, or who could not afford to pay his fee for a visit.'

And now to conclude with a very interesting anecdote, which is not likely to be so familiar as to be stale. Some forty years ago, it is said, a lady called upon Mr Longman, head of the publishing firm in Paternoster Row, and pleaded: 'Give me the subject of a book for which the world has a need, and I will write it for you.'

Mr Longman asked: 'Are you an author?'

'I am a poet,' was the reply; 'but—the world does not want poems.'

The publisher remarked, a little dubiously: 'Well, we want a good cookery-book.'

'Then,' said the lady, 'you advise me to write a cookery-book?'

Cautiously the publisher rejoined: 'I should advise you to do so, if I were confident of your ability to write a good one.'

Well, years went by; and, during those years, cooks and epicures and housewives in all parts of England were besieged for receipts to be forwarded to the address of a certain lady. The lady's own flattering letters or persuasive speech either elicited from the cooks themselves the information required, or enlisted the cooks' masters and mistresses on her side; and 'the result of her exertions, carried on for many years with equal resoluteness and good temper, was the *Modern Cookery in all its Branches*, published in 1845, which continues to hold its place in the esteem of housewives.' Its author was Miss Acton, who 'derived from her one great work an adequate provision for the remainder of her life.'

VENERABLE ERRORS.

A SCRUPULOUS regard for precedent is one of the remarkable peculiarities of English constitutional usage. When a matter has to be considered out of the common run of events, there is an immediate search of records to find out a precedent, perhaps a hundred and fifty years back. There is, no doubt, a virtue in this regard for precedent. It saves us from running into mischievous novelties. But it has its drawback. Sometimes the most beneficial measures are retarded, positively obstructed, because there is no precedent for them. Horrid cruelties, such as the burning of old women for witchcraft, and the hanging of poor wretches for stealing to the value of a few shillings in a dwelling-house, have been remorselessly perpetrated, because all was according to rule and precedent. This marvellous respect for precedent, a good thing in the main, is seen in our own times to have been carried the most absurd lengths; and,

in fact, most of the improvements now enjoyed have been effected in the face of intense opposition. A curious illustration of the reluctance to adopt any changes may be found in a speech delivered by Lord Lichfield in his capacity of Postmaster-general, when, in reference to Rowland Hill's penny-postage scheme, he declared, with all red-tape solemnity: 'Of all the wild and visionary schemes I have ever heard of, it is the most extravagant.'

There is a work of great authority, containing cases in Crown law reserved for the solemn decision of the judges, extending from the year 1731 to 1789, which contains many illustrations proving that sage expositors of the law, fettered by their love of precedent, could indulge in puerilities, strained constructions, and subtleties, not surpassed by Duns Scotus, who never could satisfactorily resolve the question, whether, when a hog is carried to market with a rope tied about his neck, and held at the other end by a man, the animal is brought to market by the rope or the man. The facts of the following trial are familiar to many readers, but are briefly noticed, in order to shew how a great crime and admitted guilt went unpunished, because morals and justice were made subordinate to technicalities. At the Old Bailey session of 1754, a poor innocent fellow, Joshua Kidden, was tried before Mr Justice Foster, for robbing Mary Jones on the highway. She swore positively as to his identity, and as to the circumstances of the robbery, in which she was corroborated by a villain of the name of Berry. Kidden, although innocent, was convicted and executed; and on the first of March following, the customary reward then payable was divided among the prosecutrix, John Berry, Stephen Macdamil, and Thomas Cooper. These conspirators, who had associated themselves together to accuse innocent persons, or to incite to the commission of robberies upon themselves, in order to obtain the reward of a successful prosecution, were found out at last by means of the arrest of one Blee; and in 1756, Macdamil, Berry, and Mary Jones were indicted for the wilful murder of Joshua Kidden, by maliciously causing him to be unjustly apprehended, falsely accused, tried, convicted, and executed, knowing him to be innocent of the fact laid to his charge, the intent being to share the blood-money among them. They were convicted upon the clearest and most satisfactory evidence, and scenes of depravity were disclosed as horrid as unexampled. Murder, under the name of law, is the worst of crimes—the name of an angel assumed to facilitate the act of a fiend; but the judgment was respited upon a doubt whether an indictment for murder would lie; and the miscreants were eventually discharged, without the Attorney-general of the day, Sir Robert Henley, even arguing the point. After such a gross failure of justice, no wonder a certain Charles Lee was directed to be acquitted because the property he stole was described as impressed with a lion's ram-

pant,' whereas, upon inspection, he was found to be 'passant.' How the heraldic sensibilities of the accused could have been wounded by a misdescription of terms he never knew, or how the distinction could have made the least difference in the character of the offence, or his means of defending himself, it would be difficult for even the most acute casuist to demonstrate.

There are many urban, fustian-coated mechanics, Neros and Domitians in humble life, who beat and starve their wives and children, and reserve all their regard and attention for bull-dogs, and brutes of congenial tempers with their own; and a member of this section of the community was in the year 1763 introduced at the Old Bailey to Chief Baron Parker, in order to explain to him and to twelve gentlemen, why, with a certain razor, he cut the neck of his wife Agnes, with intent to maim and disfigure. The facts proved were, that he returned home one night after his wife and children were in bed, and asleep, and cut her throat with an old razor which he had concealed in his stocking, making a wound about three inches in length, and quite across; but, providentially, it was not mortal. The criminal had been in bed some time previously, meditating upon his act, and the means by which effectually to carry it out; but it was held that the offence was not a 'lying in wait,' within the words of the act of parliament, and William Lee was left at liberty to indulge again in his innocent amusement. Mrs Caudle, in the perpetration of her celebrated Caudle lectures, might have pleaded with equal justice, that she was not lying in wait for her victim husband, when he tucked in the bed-clothes, and hoped to enjoy sound repose, instead of being assailed with domestic lectures, from which escape was as impossible as from the mosquito that the traveller in the East finds to his misery within the gauze curtains he has so carefully closed.

One barbarous usage the *wisdom* of our ancestors sanctioned, and at which our common humanity shudders. Some accused persons obstinately refused to plead to an indictment upon which they were to be subsequently tried, and the course adopted in such instances was to heap ponderous weight after weight upon the chest and body of the unhappy wretch, until he expired, if persisting in remaining mute. For this has been substituted the more obvious course of entering a formal plea of 'Not guilty,' and then proceeding with the evidence for the prosecution. It may be asked, what could have been the motive which led men to remain obstinately silent, when the consequences were so terrible? The motive was usually a noble and unselfish one—to preserve their property from being forfeited to the crown by a conviction, and innocent children deprived of their patrimony; and it remained for the humanity of recent legislators, in spite of the venerable errors included in the three fallacies, '*wisdom* of our ancestors,' '*precedent*,' and '*irrevocable laws*,' to abolish the law of forfeiture, which plundered the infant in his cradle for the errors or the crimes of his parent. That abuses will always exist which require reformation, none can doubt, and one may be pointed out which flourishes in all its injustice.

It was in criminal trials that formerly the accused were hunted down without the least regard to fair-play—witnesses for the prisoner, in

cases of treason and felony, were not, until the reign of Queen Anne, allowed to be examined upon oath; and therefore their testimony was not regarded with the reverence or weight incident to an appeal to the Almighty. Witnesses were previously not even allowed to give evidence as to the good character of the accused, except in a case involving life. Counsel were not allowed to address the jury on the part of their clients; and what a position in which to place even the most innocent of men, suffering under the prejudices incident to the being accused, and with the dark shadows of the dock, giving their ominous colouring to every action and expression, however innocent! But how was the wrong intensified, when the prisoner was humble and illiterate! Fighting with skilled legal athletes—his tongue fettered, and perhaps unequal even, under the circumstances, to string together ten sentences in logical sequence. Bishop Atterbury, on the bill of pains and penalties exhibited against him for alleged treasonable correspondence with the Pretender, produced few witnesses, but among them was Pope. He was called to prove that, while he was an inmate of the palace at Bromley, the bishop's time was completely occupied by literary and domestic matters, and that no leisure was left for plotting. But Pope, who was unaccustomed to speak in public, lost his head, and, as he afterwards owned, though he had only ten words to say, made two or three blunders. And it is well known that the poet Cowper, who, through his family interest, obtained a nomination to the honourable and lucrative post of clerk to the House of Lords, when the time arrived to make a brief declaration before that assembly, was thrown into such a state of confusion and alarm, that he preferred the alternative of resigning the appointment. And according to Olivet, in his *History of the French Academy*, the celebrated Duke de Larocheffoucault, whose courage and genius were alike distinguished, never could summon resolution at his election to address the members. Even the poor privilege of having his attorney sitting at his side, and giving him suggestions, was denied to the accused. On the trial of John Ashton, at the Old Bailey, for high treason, 1691, he thus addressed Chief-justice Holt, regarded, and deservedly so, as one of the most estimable of men: 'My lord, I humbly desire you would give my solicitor leave to be as near me as he possibly can; only to refresh my memory, if I should forget anything.'

What was the response of the Chief-justice? 'That is a thing you cannot of right demand. Pen and ink, and paper, you may.'

In piteous and appealing accents, the prisoner observed: 'My lord, I shall acknowledge it as a great favour.'

But this cannot be; humanity and justice ask in vain, and precedent replies to the modest and reasonable request: 'That is an innovation that ought not to be; the court cannot allow it.'

A singular event occurred in 1818, which startled society in general, but ruffled not the calm of the judicial mind as to the gross absurdity of a law which had long rested in the archives of feudalism, but was then brought out, and made use of with effect. A young girl, Mary Ashford, was found murdered under circumstances which fixed the strongest suspicion upon one Abraham Thornton, who had accompanied her home from a ball, and had been with her, as he

himself admitted, a short time before the discovery of her body, not far from the pond of water in which it lay. Notwithstanding the cogency of the proofs against him, the accused was acquitted; but the brother of the poor victim of outrage being dissatisfied with the result, proceeded to resort to the antiquated remedy known as an appeal of murder—namely, summoning Thornton into the Court of King's Bench, in order to obtain satisfaction for the crime, and to have the proper punishment inflicted, irrespective of the previous verdict; and examples have not been wanting where a man has been found guilty on the same evidence that led to an acquittal by the first. Upon this appeal of murder, as it was technically designated, having been brought, the accused availed himself of a right, the existence of which had been almost forgotten: he summoned the brother to a 'wager of battle,' that is to say, a trial by combat, instead of submitting to the finding of a jury; and the validity of this right being incontrovertible, the counsel for young Ashford received a severe reproof from the judges, because he designated the demand as unreasonable and barbarous. The brother, a weak youth, twenty years of age, could not venture to engage in a conflict of clubs with the athletic Abraham Thornton: he was obliged to recall his accusation; the suspected was once more acquitted; and in the following year, a 'venerable error' was condemned, and an act of parliament had to be passed abolishing trial by combat.

In the ordinary transactions of life, a man will not pay for an article which has no existence in fact, and which he has never seen; but, unfortunately for that precious jewel, human life, many innocent have been found guilty of murder, when, after the scaffold has done its work, the assumed deceased was discovered to be alive. Some well-known instances have been recorded, but two which are not familiar may here be mentioned. A rare tract in the *Harleian Miscellany* gives an elaborate and detailed account of the examination, confession, trial, condemnation, and execution of Joan Perry, and her sons, John and Richard, for the murder of William Harrison. The latter was a land-steward to a lady of rank, and John Perry was his servant; and both having gone on a journey, the master was missing, and suspicion fell upon his attendant. Being accused of the homicide, he became confused, made various inconsistent statements, and finally gave a very circumstantial account of the murder having been committed by himself, his mother, and brother; hoping to be admitted by the crown as an accomplice merely. The three were found guilty, and executed; but after an interval of three years, Harrison reappeared, and it then transpired that he had been seized on the coast, conveyed into Turkey, where for two years he remained as a slave. The second instance we notice occurred in America. There were two brothers of the name of Boon, who in 1819 were convicted in the supreme court of Vermont for the murder of Baptist Colvin, on the 10th of May 1812. Colvin was their brother-in-law, rather of weak mind, and considered by the members of the family, who were bound to support him, as a burden. On the day of his disappearance, being in a distant field where the Boons were at work, a violent quarrel arose between them, and one of the brothers struck him a severe blow on the head

with a club, which felled him to the ground. Some suspicion of his being murdered arose by the finding of his hat in the same field, a few months afterwards, but suspicion gradually subsided, until, in 1819, when one of the neighbours, having repeatedly dreamed of the homicide with great minuteness of circumstances, both as respected his death and the concealment of his remains, the brothers were again accused, and generally believed guilty. Upon strict search, a fragment of his clothes was found in an old open cellar in the same field; and in the hollow stump of a tree, not many rods distant, two nails and a number of bones, believed to be those of a man. Upon those facts, followed by a *deliberate* confession of the commission of the murder by the accused, the Boons were convicted; but, fortunately, before their execution, Colvin was discovered living in New Jersey, having fled there, apprehensive of further violence from what occurred in the field. The solution of the confession thus made by two innocent men was simply this, that an injudicious adviser suggested that, by such an admission of their guilt, their sentence would be commuted to perpetual imprisonment.

To illustrate the value of confessions for imaginary offences, and at the same time to exemplify the boasted 'wisdom' of our ancestors of not very remote date. In July 1716, an era glorious in the realms of literature and of thought, and made resplendent by the genius of a Pope, a Swift, an Arbuthnot, and others of nearly equal fame, a substantial farmer of the name of Hickes accused his wife and child (the latter a girl only nine years of age), on their own admission, of witchcraft. They were tried before Judge Wilmot, at Huntingdon, and on the prosecution of the husband and the father, the wife and child were hanged. What a deplorable consistency is there to be always found in the rules which would perpetuate injustice and error, and sacrifice truth upon the altar of prejudice, thus inverting the natural principles of justice. By the manual of the Inquisition, published in 1761, it was solemnly laid down, that if a witness has perjured himself, he can correct his first evidence, and then the judges will hold by the second, provided that it *implicates* the accused; for if it be favourable to him, they will adhere to the first statement. And continental jurists established the doctrine, that persons of notoriously bad character, although not to be believed upon their oaths, on the ordinary occasions of disputes that might arise between man and man, were to be believed if they swore that any one had bewitched them. A showman once exhibited an unhappy animal, which he described as being unable to live on land, and died in the water; and in the old times in Spain, those who were believed to be secretly Jews were placed in something of as unenviable a position, for the presumptive proof of Judaism was held to be confirmed if a man gave Hebrew names to his children; while a professed member of that persuasion, by a law of Henry II., was prohibited, under the severest penalties, from giving them Christian names.

And, as respects all sanitary details—as to the bringing home of justice to every man's door by the agency of local tribunals—the redress of real grievances through the medium of the press and of public opinion—the encouragement of true genius in every department, that overleaps all barriers of class distinction—the reign of Victoria may well

contrast with that of any previous one. Unlike the magician in Aladdin, we prefer new lamps to old, and can find no magical illumination in the light of the latter.

SCENES ON THE SPANISH ROADS.

SPAIN is a grand country for an artist, as the scenes on the Spanish roads are so utterly different from what one sees elsewhere. It was not until we had left Seville some miles behind us, that we began to see the real wildness of the country portion of Spain. Our route lay in a north-west direction, and for many miles the country was flat and uninteresting. As we looked back, the tall spire of the Giralda was visible, glistening in the sunlight, and towering above the town of Seville. The climate of Seville is such that scarcely any fires are required except for culinary purposes, and it is said that an expert Spanish cook can find in a newspaper enough fuel to cook a dinner. Thus, there is scarcely any smoke to be seen even over such a large town as Seville, and the views, consequently, in this clear climate are superb.

From looking back at the glistening Giralda, we turn our attention to the road before, and there are a string of mules approaching us. Each of these mules is loaded with what appears an enormous burden. High up on the creature's back, and extending far on either side, there is a pile of dark-looking material, which gives the poor animal the appearance of being enormously overweighted. As this procession approaches us, we distinguish that the load carried by the mules consists of large planks of cork. These pieces of cork are about three or four feet in length, nearly two feet broad, and about three inches thick. On the leading mule a Spaniard is seated, and is perched among the cork; the colour of his dress and his brown complexion giving him the appearance of a piece of cork. He is what we should call an ill-looking rascal, if we saw him in England. His garments are patched or torn, leather being largely used, both in portions of his jacket, and as a sort of protection to his trousers. His waist is girded by a broad cotton or woollen sash of scarlet or blue, and in this sash is his knife, which no Spaniard thinks of travelling without, especially along the country roads. It is usual to find a rider on the first and last mule of a team, the total number of mules sometimes amounting to ten or a dozen. When one meets these strings of mules, and hears the jingle of their necklace of bells, one feels that he is in Spain, the whole scene being so thoroughly national. Of course, the muleteers themselves are enjoying their cigarette, for every man in Spain smokes. How some of them manage to cover the outlay, it is difficult to say, for nearly every Spaniard consumes about twenty-five or thirty cigarettes per day, the cost of which is about threepence-halfpenny. Now, if threepence-halfpenny were deducted from the wages of an English labourer for something which, however much it may be deemed a necessity, is, after all, only a luxury, we believe such a sum would be severely felt; yet the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in Spain consume this amount of tobacco every day.

Those who are fond of old stones have a rich treat on the road from Seville towards Guadalcanal. About six miles from Seville, and on the

left of the road, there are the ruins of a Roman amphitheatre. These ruins are very perfect. There are the dens in which the wild beasts were kept, and from which they were let loose into the arena. The seats remain; and, in fact, but little time, trouble, and expense would be required to put this place into working order. These ruins are called *Itálica*. The name, however, formerly applied to a city, of which these ruins are the only remains. Scipio Africanus founded this city, and it was used as a resting-place for the soldiers employed in the siege of Carthage. It is remarkable as the birthplace of the Roman emperors Trajan, Adrian, and Theodosius. Several statues of no great merit have been dug up in these ruins, and are preserved in Seville; whilst coins are discovered, and are offered for sale by some wretched-looking old hags, who seem to start into sight immediately a visitor is seen to enter the gallery leading to the podium.

Whilst we were examining the ruins of *Itálica*, our attention was directed to three birds which were flying towards us, and at no great elevation. We knew at once that they were remarkable birds, as their size and flight indicated this. Their course conducted them exactly over our heads; and as they passed, we saw that they were three bustards. They were very strong on the wing, but not quite so large as those of the same species that we have seen in Africa. The bustard is not uncommon in the south of Spain, and we believe good sport might be had with these birds in many places. They are wild and very wary, but still a sportsman would be able to obtain many shots at them.

When one leaves the more civilised portions of Spain, and comes into the wilder country, a number of crosses will be seen on the side of the road. In the Sierra Morena, these crosses are very common, and they do not indicate any highly religious feeling on the part of the inhabitants, but are generally intended to mark the locality of a murder. On our journey, near Guadalcanal, one of our men pointed out to us a very rough cross near a small gully, and told us that this was the spot where a murder had been committed a few years before. The description he gave of the affair, shewed one of the peculiarities of the Spanish character. Two men, who might fairly be termed brigands, lay in ambush for another man, who, they knew, was in possession of a few dollars. This man they murdered and robbed. A dispute then arose between the two as regarded the division of the spoil, which soon ended by one stabbing the other, and thus securing the whole.

It is a custom amongst the inhabitants in some parts to pick up a stone, and place it just under the cross. Why this is done, we could not ascertain; but it is the practice to do so in other countries besides Spain. No people we have ever met seem to more thoroughly enjoy doing nothing than do the Spaniards. In Seville, they pass the greater part of the day in what may be called lounging and smoking; whilst the men in the villages seem to do little or nothing. When, however, we know that nearly all the food that a Spaniard requires is a few chestnuts and some baked olives, we see a reason why, with so inactive a nature, he avoids work.

In one of the villages between Seville and Guadalcanal, we had an opportunity of seeing the rustic Spaniard enjoying himself; and certainly

his proceeding was not one likely to elevate him in our eyes. The peasants had been regaling themselves, and having a large drink of their abominable 'fire-water,' and we had heard them shouting and quarrelling during the greater part of the night, for the spirit-shop was directly opposite the *venta* at which we were staying. We arose shortly before daybreak, and strolled outside our inn, to study the Spaniard at home; and we then saw eight or ten men, holding each other's arms, and marching backwards and forwards up and down the street, and shouting discordantly. They would stop occasionally, and all clap their hands, and thus stand for nearly half an hour merely clapping hands; then they would combine clapping hands, marching to and fro, and singing. It may appear somewhat absurd to attempt to define in what manner a half-drunken man should enjoy himself, so as not to look like an idiot; and when we have witnessed some of the numerous scenes which occur in England after certain jovial dinners, we should hesitate before we condemn as idiotic the proceedings of tipsy Spanish peasants. Yet we do not remember ever to have seen anything which appeared so utterly to indicate feeble-minded men, as the senseless acts of these peasants, who found enjoyment during a whole night in merely walking backwards and forwards clapping their hands. To produce such a condition, it requires that a man must have fed for years on nothing better than roasted chestnuts and baked olives.

Nothing can be more solitary than the lives led by some of the Spanish peasants. At one place we found a farm-house, the inhabitants of which were an old man, his wife, and their daughter; there was no other house within ten miles of these people, and they were disinclined to travel. They informed us that, during the last three years, they had not gone a league from their house; and it was rare indeed for any travellers to visit them. On our first arrival we found two donkeys, three cats, and four or five hens in possession of the only room in the house. The entrance to the stable was through the sitting-room. The husband was away when we arrived; but when he saw smoke coming out of the chimney, he knew something was going on, so he left his work in the fields, and came to share in any excitement that might be had at home.

Previously to the arrival of the man, we had aired our Spanish as much as possible; the few words we knew were such as could be made use of to express our wish for hot water, our opinion that it was fine weather, &c. In spite of the fact that the old lady had travelled so very little, yet she knew we were English; and upon the entrance of her husband, she replied to his inquiry as to who was there, by telling him two Englishmen. Having wished the man good-day, and uttered one sentence with regard to the weather, we had exhausted our Spanish; but the effect was surprising, for the man, having taken a good look at us, informed his wife that she was an old fool not to see that we were Castilians, and not Englishmen.

It is the general opinion among those who have not travelled much in Spain, that the Spaniard will use his knife as soon as his tongue. We were under this impression when we first entered Spain; but after we had travelled in the wild and little known district of the Sierra

Morena, we learned the fact, that two Spaniards will abuse one another five times as much as two Englishmen without coming to blows.

On one occasion, we were ascending a long hill about twenty miles from Seville; the road was narrow, so that it was difficult for one vehicle to pass another. Just as we came to a steep part of the hill, we found in the road, and partly across it, a large cart laden with poles. The load of this cart was too heavy for the mules, and it had stuck in the road. We were thus prevented from passing, and had to pull up and wait.

Immediately our driver found that this vehicle blocked the way, he abused the men belonging to it with a torrent of words. The other side replied with equal energy, and two more of our men joined in the abuse, and were answered by those on the other side. Such an uproar and such excitement we had never before witnessed, and we were in momentary expectation that knives would be drawn, and a free fight commenced. We felt if our revolver were handy, so as to come to the rescue in time of need, and then waited to see what would happen. After about a quarter of an hour of this battle of words, exhaustion set in, and the men began to consider how we were to get the vehicle clear of the road. They asked us to lend them our horses to pull them up the hill, and then to come back for our wagonette; but this we declined, and suggested that they should take half the load off their wagon, ascend the hill, unload their wagon, and return for the other half-load. This, after another tremendous argument, they agreed to do. We, however, had merely to wait until the wagon was dragged out of our way, when we passed the obstacle, and should soon have left it behind, had not our attention been called to a magnificent spring of water, which formed a pool beside the road. We all went to this pool, and all drank; and then our own men sat down on the bank with the men of the other vehicle, lighted their cigarettes, and chatted away in the most friendly manner imaginable.

On our return journey to Seville, we had the opportunity of noting one or two facts. On the banks of a stream we crossed, the oleander grew to a great size, almost to a tree; we saw several at least twelve feet high, and three inches thick in the stem. At one or two places suitable for animals to drink, we saw the footprints of a buck, as large as the red deer. We also saw footprints of a pig, and our men informed us that wild boars were common here. There was no evidence that the river rose to any great amount at any time, four or five feet rise being apparently the extent. On the bank of this stream, and on nearly all those we saw in the south of Spain, woodcocks are abundant.

We heard an immense deal about brigands, mostly from Spaniards. Upon our announcing to one of the officials at Seville that we proposed travelling up the country, and visiting the out-of-the-way villages, we were told that it was very risky, and that we should only be acting with prudence if we took an escort with us. This escort, we learned, was to consist of two of the civil guard, and that we should be expected to pay for the protection thus afforded. Our estimation of the civil guard, however, was not very favourable, and we could not but feel that, if the brigands were at all up to their work, the civil guard would be easily disposed of. It is true that perhaps these

men might produce a moral influence on robbers, just as policemen do in England, and, under such a condition, they would be a protection; but we declined the honour of these gentlemen's escort, and determined to incur the risk by ourselves. Now, as we had with us a driver and an assistant, an interpreter, and a guide, we mustered rather a strong party; and it may be that the rapidity of our movements, combined with our numbers, and the knowledge that we were armed, caused us to be unmolested on our journey, for, in more than one place, we found groups of men, whose rascally looks and apparent want of occupation seemed to indicate that it was not honest labour by which they obtained their daily bread. At one of the ventas at which we stopped, we noticed two tremendous-looking ruffians, who scowled at us in anything but a friendly way. More than once, whilst we were in the cupboard sort of place that served as our bedroom, we noticed these men pass the open doorway—for door there was none—and peep in at us. Such a proceeding might be mere curiosity, but as they had no business to be in our outer room at all, we looked upon their proceeding as suspicious. In order to warn them off, we called our interpreter, and told him to explain to the people who were wandering about near our doorway, that we hoped no accident would occur, but that, having lived formerly in a wild country, where dangerous animals prowled about sometimes of a night near our camp, we had a habit of suddenly waking up, and, before we quite knew what we were about, of firing when we heard a noise; thus, if we once went to sleep, and were awoken, as we certainly should be by any one walking near us, we should probably forget where we were, and might then fire a shot in haste, and perhaps with fatal results.

After our speech to him, our interpreter cautioned all those who were round the fire, and added the information that we had put a bullet through his hat, when he had thrown it in the air to test our skill with a revolver. During the remainder of the night we were not disturbed by inquisitive wanderers near our bedroom, for even the Spanish brigand has a wholesome dread of six barrels and a steady hand.

About a fortnight after we were in this district, two Spanish gentlemen who were travelling there were captured by brigands, and held to ransom, and did not escape without the payment of a large sum of money; so that we learned that there were such things as brigands in this country, a fact even more lately proved by the stoppage and robbery of a railway train.

We were told by a Spaniard, but we know not whether it is true, that the reason why robbery and other crimes were so common in these mountains was, that there was so large a party in favour of crime, that no one dared either to denounce the robbers, or appear as evidence against them. Even the authorities in certain places feared to condemn a man; and thus, with but little chance of punishment, robbery and crime became profitable amusements. A check, it was told us, had been put on these proceedings by another somewhat novel expedient. Men found red-handed, or known to have committed crime, were taken by somewhat roundabout and solitary routes to the authority who ought to have sentenced them. The conductors well knowing that their prisoner, no matter

how plain his guilt, would be released for want of evidence, watched their opportunity, and then shot the murderer, and pursued their journey alone, reporting at the end of it that they were attacked by their prisoner, and had to shoot him in self-defence. By this ingenious plan, several bad characters were got rid of without the trouble of a trial, and without allowing the prisoners to escape through any legal quibble.

Certainly, the country north of Seville is well suited for brigands. It is the least densely populated of any country we ever saw. It is covered, in most places, with a low scrubby bush, which would afford concealment to a score of men. There is plenty of water, and, for a Spaniard, plenty of food, as rabbits swarm. Other game is abundant, and the great stand-by, olives, can be obtained anywhere. The only rarity seems to be travellers, at least travellers worth robbing, for the game of taking gentlemen prisoners and making them pay ransom, has been played more than once in the Sierra Morena; consequently, even those Spaniards who own property, and have shooting in that district, do not like to venture to trespass on their own land. Foreigners, of course, are rare, because they usually have a beaten track pointed out by their guide-book, from which they do not care to deviate.

A story we heard from a Spanish gentleman spoke well for the boldness and skill of some courageous Englishmen. A train was stopped by Spanish brigands. Whilst the robbers were busy in the carriages robbing the passengers, three Englishmen got out of one carriage, and coming quickly to that in which were the brigands, colared them, and disarmed them in an instant, and left them in charge of some other passengers; then taking the brigands' own weapons, they approached the engine, where there were two brigands threatening the engine-driver and stoker. These men were in a like manner threatened, and ordered to lay down their arms, and were then made prisoners, and conveyed into Madrid; thus making their attack not a very successful one.

However much some persons may laugh at the idea of there being danger in travelling in Spain, still every Spaniard is invariably armed. And we were informed by an intelligent Spaniard who knew well the country in which we had travelled, that he would not have ventured there without an escort of five hundred soldiers.

During our journey by wagonette, we frequently preceded the vehicle, when there was a long hill before us; and as these hills were sometimes two miles long, and steep, we not unfrequently were many hundred yards in front. On one occasion, when thus alone, we saw two men on the hill-side with guns; they were in the bush, and about three hundred yards from us. Immediately we turned a corner, and came in sight of them, they both crouched down, and concealed themselves in the cover. This proceeding was suspicious; and not wishing to give them any very great chance, in case they were brigands, we moved on, and turned a corner of the road, and thus moved out of their sight; we then sought shelter in the bush, and stalked the enemy. Having obtained a good position, whence we could see the hill where the men were concealed, we waited to watch their movements. In a very few seconds, first one, then the other head appeared; and then both men ran rapidly among the bushes

parallel to the road, and disappeared; they were evidently not running away from us, and we anticipated that a bend in the road in front would probably lead it near some cover, for which these men were making. A solitary, and apparently unarmed traveller might easily have been 'potted,' and concealed before the wagon arrived; so we waited to watch further proceedings. Now, it happened that, in consequence of the length and steepness of this hill, our vehicle made several long stoppages; thus we were nearly half an hour in front of it. After we had remained about ten minutes in our cover, we saw the two men creep over the hill, and look along the road; they appeared certainly interested in our whereabouts; and having most likely been puzzled to account for not having seen us on the road in front, had come to look at us on the road behind. Those who have had anything to do with bush-warfare, are aware of the immense advantage that the man stationary in cover possesses over the man who is moving. The former can always tell where the latter is, and can, of course, select his own time for a shot; thus, we knew as long as we were motionless, and did not shew, we should possess an immense advantage over these two suspicious-looking gentlemen; and if they really meant mischief, and approached our position, we could have put two or three bits of lead into them before they could have time to pull a trigger. What their intentions were, we did not learn, for, in a short time, the vehicle approached; and when it was between us and the men in the bush, so as to conceal our movements, we broke cover, and kept the body of the vehicle between us and the enemy. When we had passed the suspicious locality, we called our interpreter, and told him what we had seen. After a brief conversation with his companions, he informed us that the men were most likely poachers, and that this occupation was usually carried on with robbery and a few other amusements; that these men would shoot us as soon as look at us, if they had a chance of robbing us too; and they earnestly requested that we would not again venture so far in front of the vehicle, as they felt themselves responsible in a great measure for our safe-conduct.

Future travellers in the Sierra Morena may possibly have greater opportunities for seeing the brigand or robber in greater proximity than we did, and to be taken by brigands would much increase the interest of one's narrative.

SONNET—A FROSTY NIGHT.

Out in the keenness of the pinching air!
 Out in the silence of the frosty night!
 O what a smart sensation of delight
 Steals through our tingling veins! the heaven is bare,
 With its deep blueness and its stars; and there
 Hangs like an icicle the crystal moon—
 One edge of frozen brilliancy, and one
 Dissolving into nothing—oh, so fair!
 Briskly we march along each icy lane,
 Crunching the brittle ruts and crisped soil
 Beneath our bounding feet; the lumb'ring wain
 Follows the sturdy horses' panting toil:
 Yea, all things are in such a bracing mood,
 They breed a glorious frenzy in the blood!

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